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ABSTRACT

For the past two years McKinley High School has been operating on a quarter system in which the September through June school year is divided into four 9-week instructional periods. A formal evaluation was conducted with the intention of getting firsthand information from students and staff on the advantages and disadvantages of the system. A total of 1,337 administrators, teachers, and students responded to the survey. Of this number, 57 percent indicated they liked the quarter system, 27 percent said they did not like the system, and 16 percent were undecided. The document contains the questionnaires; percent distribution and rank order of responses categorized by interest groups, i.e., administrators, counselors, teachers, and students; and write-in comments and suggestions. (Author/MLF)

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ED 062 686

MCKINLEY HIGH SCHOOL QUARTER SYSTEM

EVALUATION REPORT

SCHOOL YEAR 1970 - 71

The Division of Planning, Research and Evaluation
Department of Research and Evaluation
September, 1971

EA 004 111

Public Schools of the District of Columbia

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Evaluation Summary

Title: McKinley High School Quarter System

Location: McKinley High School, Washington, D. C.

Date: School Year 1970-71

Target Population:
- 4 Administrators
- 6 Counselors
- 104 Teachers
- 2,256 Students

Background and Rationale:

McKinley High School has been operating on a quarter system for two years. In the McKinley Quarter System the regular school year, September thru June, is divided into four nine-week instructional periods. Many of the people who have been involved in this system have mixed emotions about it. They have witnessed the good points and they admit that there are problems.

The system was originated by a combined effort of students, faculty and administrators. After about a semester of planning the system was adopted. Everyone worked very hard to make the system a success.

Like any other experiment in its pilot stage, the adoption of the quarter system in McKinley High School had problems of implementation including scheduling of classes, course offerings, computerizing data on attendance, students' schedules, report cards and the like. In the process of meeting these problems and finding solutions to them, the students and staff pulled their resources together in an effort to arrive at rational decisions.

Purpose of Study:

In line with the McKinley students' and staff's effort in evaluating the quarter system the Department of Research and Evaluation conducted a formal evaluation with the intention of getting first-hand information from students and staff on the advantages and the disadvantages of the system. The results will hopefully shed light on the merits of the quarter system in the high school curriculum offerings that may serve as the basis for decision making in the event that other high schools contemplate to adopt the quarter system.

Findings:

A total of 1,337 administrators, teachers and students responded to the survey. Fifty-seven percent of this number indicated that they

like the quarter system. Twenty-seven percent do not like the system, while sixteen percent are undecided.

The majority of the sixty-four staff members, who have work experience in the quarter system and another system, prefer another system, while over half of the 551 students, who have attended a secondary school using another system, prefer the quarter system. The teachers' reactions seem to result from the additional yet to be solved problems the quarter system has created for these teachers.

The most outstanding good points as given by administrators, faculty and students are:

1. The students can choose their teachers, courses and schedule.

2. There is a greater variety of courses to choose from.

3. If a course is failed, then only one-fourth credit is lost.

4. Students are not locked in the same class with the same teacher all year.

5. A student has a chance to change, or drop course he's failing.

The main problems and dislikes given by administrators, faculty and students are:

1. Grades are not averaged for the year, thereby, if a course is failed in one nine-week quarter it must be repeated.

2. The poor system for student registration causes confusion and loss of time each quarter.

3. There is not enough good teachers and clerical staff to assume the workload, thus freeing counselors to counsel.

4. Nine weeks is too short, in some cases, to completely cover course materials, for students to improve their grades and for students and teachers to get to know each other.

Fifty-two percent of the 1,337 administrators, counselors, teachers and students felt that they would like for the quarter system to continue at McKinley High School. Most negative in their feelings about continuation were the counselors, who feel that they have too much clerical work to do and thus are not available for counseling as a result of the quarter system.

Conclusions:

The comments and suggestions given by administrators, teachers and students provide an insight into the problems and advantages of the quarter system. The system has been in operation in McKinley High School for only two years. Some of the problems encountered were not anticipated and it is only in the implementation phase that these problems are unveiled.

The problem of registration and scheduling of courses has been the concern of many teachers and pupils alike. It would be worth considering the suggestions on the possibility of using extensively the services of the computer. A system for completely computerizing the registration process where courses, schedules, teachers, credits and the like can be recorded on computer cards will facilitate the registration process and will greatly reduce clerical work.

The need for more counselors is underscored. Teachers and students attest to the fact that counseling services are necessary to help students make wise selection of courses and to make the most of their time. While a wide range of course offerings is possible in this system, it is necessary to plan students' programs to insure a well-rounded academic background that will meet their individual needs and are in keeping with their future plans.

There is the suggestion by at least fifteen students that the quarter system be explained fully to teachers and students. There seems to be some vagueness in the minds of the students of the nature of the quarter system - its objectives and procedures. A good orientation program will go a long way in enhancing students' and teachers' understanding of the quarter system.

As a group the majority of those surveyed like the quarter system and would like to see it continued at McKinley.

Recommendations:

1. Priority should be given to solving the major problems and dislikes of the quarter system.
2. The comments and suggestions given by the interest groups should be an important consideration in future planning.
3. All groups should be involved in the solving of problems and implementation of changes.
4. Effect of the quarter system may also be judged by other methods. It is recommended that further study be conducted on the effect of the quarter system on attendance, holding power of the school, behavior problems and academic achievement of students.

INTRODUCTION

"Education at McKinley High School is a search for knowledge which we believe will lead into the ways of life that are good. Individual freedom with responsibility as opposed to authoritarianism should be practiced. This knowledge and experience are necessary whenever decisions must be made." This statement was taken from the philosophy of McKinley High School found in the course of study handbook.

Background and Rationale

McKinley has been operating on a quarter system for two school years. In the McKinley Quarter System the regular school year, September thru June, is divided up into four nine-week instructional periods.

The following is a report from an in-house evaluation; dated January 25, 1971, by an assistant principal of McKinley. In this report the background and rationale is stated very well.

> During the second year of the McKinley High School functioning on the quarter system in making an evaluation, I have mixed feelings about the system. In my position I have seen all the problems and many times few of the good points about the system. The system was originated by a combined effort of students, faculty, and administrators. After planning for only about one semester, it was decided to try our plan. Many may feel this was done too quickly, but I think it was a good thing to do. Problems may arise, but if you delay putting a plan into effect it may never get started. The faculty, students, and administrators worked together to make a success of the program. Without the outstanding help of the department chairman, the system would never have functioned as smoothly and as well as it has during these two years.
>
> Departments in the school were encouraged to offer courses that the students wanted and felt relevant. Some departments feel that the quarter system has drawn the teachers closer together. They discuss their problems, where they are in each course, and work together more harmoniously. In most cases, teachers were able to select courses that they felt were their strongest subjects and in which they could do a good job. In a period of nine weeks a concise course of study and plans had to be made in order for the teacher and students to get the most done in a short time. Better teaching and learning should result.

Paperwork involved is more than tripled and without more clerical help it places a burden on everyone concerned. New records had to be made up. It is essential to have a Registrar for the building to take care of clerical work involved with incoming students, students leaving, and college and job applications. We do not have a Registrar so this falls to the counselors and administrators. Counselors need time to counsel with students about programs, plans for the future and personal problems. Administrators should be about the business of improving education and helping the teachers. More teachers are needed if courses are to be offered that will benefit the students. The first year 1969-70, we were able to offer more of a variety of courses than in 1970-71. Our staff was decreased although we had more students than the year before.

We have encountered a great deal of confusion and worry getting the few things we have asked for from the computer. The majority of our paperwork was done manually. This year has been better than last year as the Department of Automated Information is doing the work. We really need one person assigned to the school to work out a program for the attendance, grading, report cards, class average and rank each quarter, and the many other uses that the computer could provide for a school. Hours are spent on work that could be done in minutes if programmed correctly and given to the computer.

Each time we have registered for a new quarter we have used a different procedure. We feel that the procedure we are using for the second semester, 1970-71 will give the students more help and counseling from teachers and counselors, and will run smoother than the others tried. This has been a trial and error procedure, but we have learned from each registration. When a registration procedure is found that we feel is the best, a standard procedure will be worked out and will become familiar to faculty and students. Some students have had problems with the quarter system and have not availed themselves of the counselors or administration for help. Better communications must be one of the goals at all times.

On the whole the entire school has cooperated on this project and this is the reason for the success we have had. A few have not seen fit to cooperate however and "That's not my job" has been heard. This can be expected in any business, but it can become very disheartening when the goal is to try to improve education and give the students something they want and need.

We definitely need to have an outside evaluation of the quarter system as well as a more detailed evaluation from the students and faculty. A survey was made by the General Organization last week asking the students if they were pleased or displeased with the quarter system. I hope in the next two weeks to ask each homeroom to indicate the problems they have had and suggestions that students have about the quarter system. We must know these problems and try to do something about them. Suggestions can also be very helpful.

Personally, I have valued this experience with the quarter system even though it has caused many long nights and weekends of work for me. I especially value the enthusiasm of many members of the faculty who have worked beyond the "call of duty" to help out in any way they could. I feel that the quarter system may have helped McKinley through a year of rebellion and strife that other schools experienced. At least we were trying to do something relevant, and our successes overshadow the problems. The "McKinley Way" is still the best way.

Purpose of Study

Like any other experiment in its pilot stage, the adoption of the quarter system in McKinley High School had problems of implementation including scheduling of classes, course offerings, computerizing data on attendance, students' schedules, report cards, and the like. However, it is in the process of meeting these problems and finding solutions to them that the system is subjected to a close scrutiny with students and staff pulling resources together to arrive at rational decisions for resolving some of the naging problems.

A closer look at the new system was also undertaken by the staff of McKinley High School headed by the Assistant Princpal. Excerpts from the evaluation report cited in the foregoing paragraphs revealed the problems encountered and the advantages they feel will be derived from the program.

In line with the McKinley students and staff's effort in evaluating the quarter system, the Department of Research and Evaluation conducted a formal evaluation with the intention of getting first hand information from students and staff on the advantages and the disadvantages of the quarterly system. The results will hopefully shed light on the merits of the quarterly system in the high school curricular offerings that may serve as the basis for decision making in the event that other high schools contemplate to adopt the quarterly system.

PROCEDURE

Subjects

The subjects of this study include all students, full time regular teachers, guidance counselors and administrators of McKinley High School during the school year 1970-71.

All administrators, faculty, and students were notified in advance of the survey which was held on the morning of April 29, 1971. A total of 300 students and fourteen teachers were absent from school on that day. Another 372 students and seven teachers were away on school trips.

The evaluation survey was made at a time when seventy-one percent of the students and eighty percent of the teachers were present and available to participate. All administrators and counselors were present. This made a total of 1,697 people present and available of which 1,337 responded to the survey. The numerical breakdown of the participants is shown in Table I.

TABLE I

Distribution of Respondents In Relation To Total Enrollment and Total Number Present During Survey Time

Participants	Total Enrollment	Present for Survey of Total Enrollment		Responding of Those Present		Not Responding of Those Present	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Administrators	4	4	100	2	50	2	50
Counselors	6	6	100	6	100	-	--
Teachers	104	83	80	72	87	11	13
Students	2,256	1,604	71	1,257	78	347	22
Total	2,370	1,697	72	1,337	79	360	21

Evaluation Instruments

Two forms, one for students and another for staff, were developed by the Department of Research and Evaluation as data gathering instruments for the study. A sample of each form is included in Appendices A and B. The two forms are basically similar, however, the responses to the questions represent two different points of view.

Collection of Data

Interviews and conferences were held with the former principal, acting principal and an assistant principal to discuss evaluation strategy and collect background information.

Administrators, faculty and the student body were notified at least a week in advance of the survey date of April 29, 1971. On the morning of the 29th, student council members delivered the needed amount of survey forms to each homeroom. These forms were administered by the homeroom teachers and returned upon completion by the student council members. The administrators and faculty completed their staff survey forms during the same period.

Analysis of Data

Percent distribution and rank order are two methods used for presentation and analysis of data. In most instances, the data was categorized by interest groups, i.e., administrators, counselors, teachers and students. For items calling for rank a numerical value of three, two and one was assigned to the first, second and third choices respectively.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

General Reactions to the Quarter System

The overall reactions of participants in regard to the quarter system were sought in the first question of the questionnaire and are presented in Table II. The pattern of responses to this question presents an interesting study of participants' reactions from the different hierarchy of school personnel and students. The two administrators in the school responded positively. Fifty percent of the counseling staff are in favor of the system. The findings for the counseling staff is slightly higher than that of the teachers. Only 40% of the teachers involved in the quarter system indicated positive reactions to the system, about a fifth of them were undecided. This state of uncertainty among the teachers may imply that they would like to see the program through several years before arriving at a definite conclusion on the merits of the system.

TABLE II

Participants' Responses As To Whether They Like the Quarter System

Participants	Yes		No		Undecided		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Administrators	2	100	--	--	--	--	2	100
Counselors	3	50	2	33	1	17	6	100
Teachers On Qtr. System	21	40	21	40	11	20	53	100
Teachers Not On Qtr. System	8	42	7	37	4	21	19	100
12th Graders	159	58	77	28	39	14	275	100
11th Graders	273	60	102	22	82	18	457	100
10th Graders	288	55	156	30	81	15	525	100
Total	754	57	365	27	218	16	1,337	100

The two administrators, five of the six counselors, and fifty-seven of the seventy-two teachers have worked in a secondary school using a system other than the quarter system. Of these the administrators prefer the quarter system. Three of the counselors prefer another system with two counselors undecided. The teachers are twenty-one for the quarter system and thirty-one for another system with five undecided. This response from the teachers and counselors is likely due to the additional clerical burdens and problems that have resulted from implementing the quarter system. Those who are undecided are probably awaiting improvements in the system and the elimination of the major problems.

The distribution of the responses are shown in the following table:

TABLE III

Preference of Staff Who Have Experienced Another System

Staff	Qtr. System		Another		Undecided		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Administrators	2	100	--	--	--	--	2
Counselors	--	--	3	60	2	40	5
Teachers	21	37	31	54	5	9	57
Total	23	36	34	53	7	11	64

Table IV presents the system prefered by students who had attended a secondary school using a system other than the quarter system. It is assumed that students who have experienced a different organizational set-up for secondary schools would better discriminate or judge the merits of the new plan. Fifty-one percent of these students indicated they preferred the quarter system over any other system experienced by them. The findings support the reactions of all students in McKinley where 58 percent were found in favor of it (see Table II).

TABLE IV

Preference of Students Who Have Experienced Another System

Students	Qtr. System		Another		Undecided		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
12th Graders	63	48	52	40	16	12	131
11th Graders	112	58	52	27	29	15	193
10th Graders	106	47	89	39	32	14	227
Total	281	51	193	35	77	14	551

Good Points of the Quarter System

The good points of the McKinley Quarter System were given by those who like the system, those who don't like the system and by those who are undecided. The most outstanding good points are: (1) the students can choose their teachers, courses, and make out their own schedules; (2) there is a greater variety of courses to choose from; (3) if a course is failed, then only one-fourth credit is lost; (4) students are not in the same class with the same teacher all year; and (5) a student has a chance to change or drop course he's failing. All good points are shown with the frequency of first, second and third choices. To get a cumulative ranking a value of three was assigned to first choices; two to second choices; and one to third choices. The results are shown in Tables V through VIII.

TABLE V

Good Points of Quarter System Given by Administrators (N=2)

Good Points	Frequency of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
Greater variety of courses	1	--	--	3	1.5
Students are able to select teachers and subjects	1	--	--	3	1.5
Motivates students and teachers	--	1	--	2	3.5
More challenging to students and teachers	--	--	2	2	3.5
Teachers can select subjects they like to teach	--	1	--	2	3.5

TABLE VI

Good Points of Quarter System Given by Counselors (N=6)

Good Points	Frequency of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
Students are not locked in a difficult course for entire year	3	2	1	14	1
Students are able to select teachers and subjects	1	2	--	7	2
The flexibility	2	--	--	6	3
Innovative	--	1	--	2	4.5
Greater variety of courses	--	--	2	2	4.5
Students can earn more credits	--	--	1	1	6

The two good points mentioned by both administrators and counselors - students are able to choose their teachers and subjects, and the greater variety of courses - are ranked near the top by all groups.

TABLE VII

Good Points of Quarter System Given by Teachers (N=72)

Good Points	Frequency of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
Chance to make up failure, lose 1/4 credit, or change subjects	11	9	8	59	1
Greater variety of courses	12	3	3	45	2
Students can choose own courses	7	5	4	35	3
Students can choose teachers	3	4	3	20	4
Students and teachers really have to work-challenging	5	2	--	19	5
Motivates students to learn	3	3	3	18	6
The flexibility	5	1	--	17	7.5
Allows teachers to work in area of speciality	2	4	3	17	7.5
Teachers aren't stuck with one set of students all year	1	3	2	11	9
Possibility for creating and teaching new classes	1	3	--	9	10
Other "Good Points" cited	1	2	4	--	11

No good points = 5 No response = 4

Table VIII gives the good points of the Quarter System from the point of view of the students. It is interesting to note that many of the reasons that were given were primarily along the line of variety of offerings and flexibility of schedules. Direct effects on instruction such as mastery of subject matter, students' motivation, etc. seemed to rank low in the list of good points.

On the assumption that the 10th graders who have been in the system only for a year will view the plan in a different way than these students who have experienced the system during their 10th and 11th grades, tabulation of the data on good points was done by grade. These are given in Tables VIII a, b, and c, Appendix C. An analysis of the tables reveal that

there are no significant differences in the patterns of responses of the students when grouped by grades. The main good points were similar for each grade level.

TABLE VIII

Good Points of Quarter System Given by Students (N=1,257)

Good Points	Frequency of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
A greater variety of courses	198	98	72	862	1
Chance to choose courses and schedule	167	120	74	815	2
Chance to choose teachers	127	166	44	757	3
Chance to make up failure, lose only 1/4 credit, or change courses	162	85	62	718	4
Not locked in same class with same teacher all year	143	101	69	700	5
Chance to meet and work with many new people	43	64	53	310	6
Chance to get more credits and graduate earlier	49	48	23	266	7
Students learn more	20	25	16	126	8
Students and teachers really have to work; challenging	13	7	10	63	9
It's easier	8	4	9	41	10
Others (combined)	22	25	32	--	11

No good points = 74 Undecided = 3

To get a better picture of the responses as a school group all good points, that were ranked either first, second, or third by either group, were compiled into one table. The following table gives the composite ranking.

TABLE IX

A Composite Ranking of Good Points

Good Points Ranked Either 1st, 2nd, or 3rd	Rank					
	12th Graders	11th Graders	10th Graders	Teachers	Counselors	Administrators
Chance to choose teachers	1	5	3	4	-	-
Chance to choose courses and schedule	2	2	5	3	2	1.5
Greater variety of courses	3	1	4	2	4.5	1.5
Chance to make up failure, lose only 1/4 credit, or change courses	4	4	1	1	-	-
Not locked in the same class with the same teacher all year	5	3	2	9	1	-
Teachers and students really have to work - challenging	9	9	10	5	-	3.5
Greater flexibility	-	-	-	7.5	3	-
Motivates teachers and students	-	-	-	-	-	3.5
Teachers can select subjects they like to teach	-	-	-	-	-	3.5
Total responding	251	433	486	63	6	2

Problems and Dislikes of The Quarter System

Problems and dislikes the McKinley Quarter System were given by those who dislike the system, those indicating they like the system, and by those who are undecided. Regardless of their feelings toward the quarter system, the problems cited by the different groups were generally similar.

The main problems and dislikes of the quarter system are : (1) grades are not averaged for the year, thereby, if a course is failed one-fourth credit is lost and the course must be repeated; (2) the poor system for students' registration causes confusion and loss of time each quarter; (3) there is not enough good teachers, and clerical staff to handle clerical work, thus freeing counselors; and (4) the nine week-courses are too short for full coverage of materials, for students to improve their grade, and for students to get to know their teachers.

All the problems and dislikes are ranked by interest groups and are presented in Tables X through XIII. To get a clear picture of the responses as a school group all problems and dislikes, that were ranked either first, second, or third by either group, were compiled into one table.

TABLE X

Problems and Dislikes of Quarter System Given by Administrators (N=2)

Problems/Dislikes	Frequency of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
Hard core who escape registration and/or courses	1	--	--	3	1.5
Too much clerical work	1	--	--	3	1.5
Inadequate student counseling	--	1	--	2	3.5
Accountability is difficult	--	1	--	2	3.5
All departments not on quarter system	--	--	2	2	3.5

TABLE XI

Problems and Dislikes of Quarter System Given by Counselors (N=6)

Problems/Dislikes	Frequency of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
Too much clerical work	3	3	--	15	1
Lack of adequate overall planning	2	--	1	7	2
Lack of sufficient staff	2	--	--	6	3
Wasted time with four registration breaks	--	1	1	3	4
Hard on teachers with different classes each quarter	--	1	--	2	5.5
Accountability is difficult	--	1	--	2	5.5
Uncertainty in decision making	--	--	1	1	7.5
Hard core who escape registration and/or courses	--	--	1	--	7.5
Freedom of choices of teacher and subjects limited	--	--	1	--	7.5
Too much course changing; transfering after enrollment	--	--	1	--	7.5

TABLE XII

Problems And Dislikes of Quarter System Given by Teachers (N=72)

Problems/Dislikes	Frequency of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
Teachers and students don't get to know each other	12	7	4	54	1
Too much clerical work	11	8	4	53	2
The disorganization, confusion, time lost during registration	9	7	2	43	3
Courses too short for full coverage and grade improvement	6	5	5	33	4
All departments not on quarter system	5	4	5	28	5.5
Some students plan poor schedules with trivial courses	6	3	4	28	5.5
The disorganization and improper development of quarter system	5	1	1	18	7
Too much course changing; transfering after enrollment	2	4	2	16	8
Not enough good teachers to staff quarter system	1	6	--	15	9
Accountability is difficult; lot of class cutting	2	3	--	12	10.5
Inadequate student counseling; explanation of quarter system	1	4	1	12	10.5
Lack of cooperation among teachers and departments	3	--	--	9	12
Others	4	3	6	--	13

No problems/dislikes = 6 No response = 2 Listing problems/dislikes = 64

TABLE XIII

Problems And Dislikes Given By Students (N=1,257)

Problems/Dislikes	Frequency of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
Failures must be repeated; grades not averaged for year	209	60	25	772	1
The disorganization, confusion, time lost during registration	162	78	30	672	2
Courses too short for full coverage and grade improvement	127	75	37	568	3
Being crowded out of courses due to class seniority	68	42	23	311	4
Not enough good teachers to staff quarter system	44	37	16	222	5
If you fail a course it's sometimes hard to make up	58	13	8	208	6
Grades and credits are often mixed up and late	32	27	12	162	7
Inadequate student counseling; explanation of quarter system	34	21	15	159	8
Some teachers' attitudes and disinterest in students	25	18	5	116	9
Teachers and students don't get to know each other	24	13	14	112	10
Poor for slow learners; too many fail	25	10	8	103	11
Too many irrelevant course requirements	19	12	13	94	12
All departments not on quarter system	18	10	4	78	13
Difficulty in working out schedule	12	10	7	63	14
Others (combined)	70	50	19	---	15

No problems/Dislikes = 70 Undecided = 5

The student dislike ranked fourth was given by the tenth and eleventh graders only. They are against seniors getting first choice of classes. The sixth ranked problem was given by eleventh graders only. Otherwise the problems and dislikes cited by each grade were similar. Tabulations for students' responses was performed by grades and are presented in Tables XIII a, b, and c of Appendix D.

TABLE XIV

A Composite Ranking of Problems And Dislikes

Problems/Dislikes Ranked Either 1st, 2nd or 3rd By A Group	Rank					
	12th Graders	11th Graders	10th Graders	Teachers	Counselors	Administrators
Failures must be repeated; grades not averaged for year	1	5	1	17.5	--	--
The disorganization, confusion, time lost during registration	2	1	3	3	--	--
Not enough good teachers	3	9	9	9	--	--
Courses are too short for full coverage and grade improvement	4	3	2	4	--	--
If you fail a course it's sometimes hard to make up	--	2	--	--	--	--
Teachers and students don't get to know each other	5	15	8	1	--	--
Too much clerical work	16.5	21.5	--	2	1	1.5
Hard core who escape registration and/or courses	--	--	--	--	--	1.5
Lack of adequate overall planning	--	--	--	--	2	--
Lack of sufficient staff	--	--	--	--	3	--
Inadequate student counseling	7.5	8	5	10.5	--	3.5
All departments not on quarter system	12	11	12.5	5.5	--	3.5
Accountability is difficult; lot of class cutting	14	26.5	16	10.5	--	3.5
Total responding	267	429	486	64	6	2

Continuation of Quarter System

Fifty-two percent of all the participants responding to the survey would like to see the quarter system continue at McKinley High School as opposed to twenty-three percent who would not like to see it continued and twenty-five percent who are undecided. More counselors opposed the continuation of the quarter system than agreed for its continuation at McKinley. Because of its flexibility, the quarter system calls for a tremendous amount of scheduling and selection of courses for students. This aspect of the system puts additional load on counselors in their work to help children in the choice of required and elective courses along with the needed time scheduling. This reason might have accounted for the fact that 50% of the counselors in the school are against the continuation of the system. In some cases the number of respondents who are undecided could swing the majority, for or against continuation. It could be that these persons are weighing the prospects of improving the quarter system and eliminating some of the problems it has caused.

TABLE XV

Responses As To Whether The Quarter System Should Continue

Participants	Yes		No		Undecided		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Administrators	2	100	--	--	--	--	2
Counselors	2	33	3	50	1	17	6
Teachers	29	40	28	39	15	21	72
12th Graders	132	48	57	21	86	31	275
11th Graders	269	59	97	21	91	20	457
10th Graders	264	50	125	24	136	26	525
Total	698	52	310	23	329	25	1,337

A total of 310 respondents indicated that they would not like to see the quarter system continued at McKinley High School; 226 of them gave their reasons why they feel this way. These reasons are listed below. In instances where a reason was cited more than once, it is indicated by the number in parenthesis.

1. Courses are too short, therefore students don't learn as much. (47)
2. Grades are not averaged at the end of the year making it necessary to repeat courses. (43)
3. There are too many problems. (38)
4. The quarter system is too confusing and disorganized. (24)
5. Seniors often end up with too few credits to graduate. (12)
6. I don't like it and I am tired of it. (12)
7. I don't like changing courses and classes every quarter. (10)
8. I would like a completely new and free system. (8)
9. The quarter system is not suited to the present curriculum. (4)
10. It is too much trouble registering and getting into the class of your choice. (4)
11. All departments are not on the quarter system. (4)
12. I don't like to go to summer school every summer. (3)
13. Grades and credits are late or mixed up too often. (3)
14. It does not prepare you for college. (3)
15. It's a waste of educational time. (3)
16. The quarter system may fold up next year. (2)
17. It is too difficult for faculty and students. (2)
18. The students are too immature for the quarter system. (1)
19. You can't stay in a class that's truly interesting long enough. (1)
20. Counselors have too much clerical work and little time for counseling. (1)
21. Each counselor should have a secretary. (1)

These reasons are very similar in nature to the problems and dislikes cited.

Comments and Suggestions

All participants were given the opportunity to make comments and give suggestions relative to the quarter system. The comments and suggestions are listed by interest groups. Comments and Suggestions cited by more than one person are followed by the number of persons in parenthesis.

Administrators (N=2)

1. There must be some major reform, otherwise we will be unable to continue, particularly in light of students who will not register for classes.

2. I don't think two years is enough time to really decide if the quarter system should be continued.

Counselors (N=6)

1. Provide supportive personnel to handle additional clerical work or return to the semester system. (3)

2. Improve the computer system somehow.

3. The quarter system could work if we had sufficient staff. (2)

4. Organize on a semester basis instead of a quarter system.

Teachers (N=57)

1. Instead of a quarter system have a semester system. (13)

2. Make it a school-wide program including all departments. (6)

3. We need more teachers, counselors and clerical staff. (5)

4. The schedule needs revamping, but we must maintain freedom of choices and a variety of courses. (3)

5. Everyone, teachers especially, must be committed to the system for it to work. (3)

6. All problems must be worked out before further implementation. (3)

7. I can't see that the system has improved attendance or elevated student achievement. (3)

8. Give a clearer explanation of requirements so students can be more responsible about meeting the requirements. (3)

9. It may not be the best system, but it's better than the old lock-step system. (2)

10. Students are not making good course choices and will not be well rounded high school graduates. (2)

11. Extra days of pre-registrations should be allowed for absentees. (2)

12. The quarter system has not been developed according to the original plans. Much could be done, i.e., evaluation of successes and failures; effect on attendance, etc.

13. It has been a particular pleasure to be able to meet a greater number of students on all levels.

14. I have noticed that the number of students using the library has increased with the quarter system.

15. Students who are below average or lazy are not being helped too much by the quarter system.

16. We need more planning time.

17. Making suggestions are futile if you don't have the necessities for implementation.

18. The most positive feature of the quarter system is that it permits students to get out of a course in which they are hopelessly failing; this does not mean that there will be somewhere else he can go.

19. Sophomores and juniors need more than a quarter to digest a course. I don't feel that they are mature enough for such a system.

20. Have a good frank faculty talk about the quarter system and arrange it so English teachers have only two preparations at most.

21. If students fail to complete their program during registration then they should be given a program.

22. I suggest we have three quarters from September through June instead of four.

Students (N=330)

1. Get another system and do away with the quarter system. (55)

2. I like the quarter system and would like to see it continued at McKinley. (50)

3. The quarter system should be revised and improved. (32)

4. Let's have the semester system. (24)

5. Drop the 1/4 credit each quarter and average the grades for the year. (21)

6. There should be a better way of selecting and registering in courses. (17)

7. Explain the quarter system in full to all students and teachers. (15)

8. Offer more subjects and branches of subjects. (10)

9. We need more counselors and better counseling. (10)

10. We need more money, better teachers and more equipment to make the quarter system work. (8)

11. I think we should be able to take and continue the courses we want and can pass rather than take required courses and possibly fail. (8)

12. The students, teachers and administrators should get together to tell and hear each others feelings about the quarter system, then we can compromise. (7)

13. Some courses should be semester courses, i.e., English and social studies. (7)

14. Have summer school at McKinley to allow one to make up the quarter course needed. (7)

15. I think that certain classes should be for juniors and seniors only in order that they can get their requirements. (6)

16. All departments in McKinley should be on the quarter system. (5)

17. I think that required courses for college bound students should be different from required courses for non-college bound students. (5)

18. I don't think that letter grades should be used in the quarter system, instead use high pass, pass, and fail. (4)

19. I wish that seniors continue to have first choice of courses since it is their last year. (3)

20. I don't think attendance should affect your grade as long as you do good work and make up missed work. (3)

21. Don't require registration only on registration day for students who plan to continue in the same course. (3)

22. Allow students to take as many English classes as they desire and are able to handle. (3)

23. I think that as the quarter system is used longer it will become more organized and helpful to students. (2)

24. If too many students want the same course in a quarter, then more teachers should be added for that course. (2)

25. The quarter system should be implemented in all secondary schools. (2)

26. More activities should be included. (2)

27. I think the quarter system is a major breakthrough in running the public schools. It is a very flexible system which allows a student more freedom in learning. It would be a shame to go back to the old way just because a few students complain.

28. The quarter system makes it hard on teachers and students. Emphasis should lie on manageability, cooperation and majority interest.

29. I would like for subjects to be offered at the same time each quarter.

30. How can a person use the quarter system, as stated by the administrator, to graduate in two years when three years of English is a requirement?

31. I think McKinley should adopt the modular system now being used in some schools.

32. I have never seen a counselor and I am graduating next year. I could have graduated this year with proper counseling.

33. The quarter system adds interest more so than a regular system.

34. I would like for student evaluation of teachers to be included.

35. I think we should be able to change homeroom teachers also.

36. Allow students who transfer from out of zone with academic problems remain on condition.

37. If a student is having trouble in one course he should be allowed to take another course with the same credits.

38. Required courses should be scheduled first then electives.

39. Have the same course in the same room each quarter.

40. You should have some kind of special office to process complaints.

41. Go straight to the new teacher and register instead of going to every class and standing in line.

42. Use the same teacher each quarter to teach the same group of students in a continuing subject field.

43. Let us register in our homerooms.

44. Students' choices should be final.

CONCLUSIONS

Strong points of the quarter system lie primarily on its flexibility allowing students to choose their courses, teachers and their own time schedules. There is also the advantage of a variety of courses offered. A quarter credit is given to a course and therefore there is greater latitude in the selection of courses to satisfy a specific requirement. Another good aspect of the system is the opportunity to repeat the following quarter , a subject in which a student failed with a loss of only a quarter credit.

The comments and suggestions given by administrators, teachers and students provide an insight into the problems and advantages of the quarter system. A great number of the problems cited relate to registration,

selection and scheduling of courses, The system has been in operation in McKinley High School for only two years. Some of the problems encountered were not anticipated and it is only in the implementation phase that these problems are unveiled.

The problem of registration and scheduling of courses has been the concern of many teachers and pupils alike. It would be worth considering the suggestion on the possibility of using extensively the services of the computer. A system for completely computerizing the registration process where courses, schedules, teachers, credits and the like can be recorded on computer cards will facilitate the registration process and will greatly minimize clerical work.

The need for more counselors is underscored. Teachers and students attest to the fact that counseling services are necessary to help students make wise selection of courses and to make the most of their time. While a wide range of course offerings is possible in this system, it is necessary to plan students' programs to insure a well-rounded academic background that will meet their individual needs and are in keeping with their future plans.

There is the suggestion from at least fifteen students that the quarter system be explained fully to teachers and students. There seems to be some vagueness in the minds of the students of the nature of the quarter system -- its objectives and procedures. A good orientation program will go a long way in enhancing the students' understanding of the system.

As a total school group the majority of the participants responding to this survey like the McKinley Quarter System and would like to see it continued. The greater number of teachers and counselors who have worked in a secondary school using another system prefer another system whereas the greater number of students and administrators who have attended a secondary school using another system, prefer the quarter system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Priority should be given to solving the major problems and dislikes of the quarter system.

2. The comments and suggestions given by the interest groups should be an important consideration in future planning.

3. All groups should be involved in the solving of problems and implementation of changes.

4. Effect of the quarter system may also be judged by other methods. It is recommended that further study be conducted on the effect of the quarter system on attendance, holding power of the school, behavior problems, and academic achievement of students.

APPENDIX A

STAFF SURVEY FORM

Department of Research and Evaluation
Division of Planning, Research and Evaluation

McKinley Senior High School Staff Survey Form

Position _____ No. of Years at McKinley _____

How do you feel about the Quarter System at McKinley? Your input is essential to an assessment of the system. Please be candid in your responses. The results of this survey will be released to your school.

1. Do you like the Quarter System? (Circle one)

Yes No Undecided

2. Have you worked in a secondary school that uses a different system? (Circle one)

Yes No

If yes, which do you prefer? (Circle one)

Quarter system Another system Undecided

3. List three good points of the McKinley Quarter System listing the most important one as first, and the next most important as number two.

1.

2.

3.

4. List three problems or dislikes you have with the McKinley Quarter System. Begin with what you consider to be the greatest problem

1.

2.

3.

5. Would you like the Quarter System to continue at McKinley? (Circle one)

Yes No Undecided

If no, explain:

6. Comments and Suggestions

(If you need additional space, use the back of this sheet).

APPENDIX B

STUDENT SURVEY FORM

Department of Research and Evaluation
Division of Planning, Research and Evaluation

McKinley Senior High School Student Survey Form

Grade _____ No. of years at McKinley _____

How do you feel about the Quarter System at McKinley? We need your answers to the following questions. Please answer frankly and carefully. When we have prepared a report of this survey we will forward it to McKinley.

1. Do you like the Quarter System? (Circle one)

Yes No Undecided

2. Have you attended a secondary school that uses a different system? (Circle one)

Yes No

If yes, which do you prefer? (Circle one)

Quarter system Another system Undecided

3. List three good points of the McKinley Quarter System listing the most important one as first and the next most important as number two.

1.

2.

3.

4. List three problems or dislikes you have with the McKinley Quarter System. Begin with what you consider to be the greatest problem.

1.

2.

3.

5. Would you like the Quarter System to continue at McKinley? (Circle one)

Yes No Undecided

If no, explain:

6. Comments and Suggestions:

(If you need additional space, use the back of this sheet.)

APPENDIX C

Good Points of the Quarter System Given by Students

Table VIII a.

Good Points of Quarter System Given by 12th Graders (N=275)

Good Points	Freq. of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
Chance to choose teachers	48	50	8	252	1
Chance to choose courses and schedule	48	31	24	240	2
A greater variety of courses	41	28	24	203	3
Chance to make up failure, lose only ½ credit, or change courses	30	21	9	141	4
Not locked in same class with same teacher all year	21	11	12	97	5
Chance to meet and work with many new people	12	13	11	73	6
Chance to get more credits and graduate earlier	10	4	4	42	7
Students learn more	5	4	6	29	8
Students and teachers really have to work - challenging	4	4	3	23	9
Prepares you for the college system	1	1	5	10	10
It's easier	2		2	8	11
It's a new experience; a change	1	1	2	7	12.5
It improves attendance	2		1	7	12.5
The year seems shorter	-	1	2	4	14
More chances to cut classes	-	1	-	2	15.5
Summer school is offered	-	1	-	2	15.5

No good points = 23 Undecided = 1 Listing good points = 251

Table VIII b.

Good Points of Quarter System Given by 11th Graders (N=457)

Good Points	Freq. of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
A greater variety of courses	90	39	27	375	1
Chance to choose courses and schedule	67	54	32	341	2
Not locked in same class with same teacher all year	63	44	33	310	3
Chance to make up failure, lose only ¼ credit, or change courses	58	32	32	270	4
Chance to choose teachers	29	55	21	218	5
Chance to meet and work with many new people	20	30	28	148	6
Chance to get more credits and graduate earlier	15	12	12	81	7
Students learn more	11	9	5	56	8
Students and teachers really have to work - challenging	4	1	2	16	9
It's easier	3	1	2	13	10
It's a new experience; a change		4	4	12	11
The year seems shorter	1	2	3	10	12.5
Prepares you for the college system	2	2	-	10	12.5
Enables each student to satisfy individual needs	1	-	-	3	14.5
Makes McKinley the number one school in D.C.	1	-	-	3	14.5
Eliminates attending summer school for make-ups	1	-	-	3	14.5
It improves attendance	-	-	1	1	17.5
Get to know your school better	-	-	1	1	17.5

No good points = 12 Undecided = 2 Listing good points = 433

Table VIII c.

Good Points of Quarter System Given by 10th Graders (N=525)

Good Points	Freq. of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
Chance to make-up failure, lose only ½ credit, or change courses	74	32	21	307	1
Not locked in same class with same teacher all year	59	46	24	293	2
Chance to choose teachers	50	61	15	287	3
A greater variety of courses	67	31	21	284	4
Chance to choose courses and schedule	52	35	18	244	5
Chance to get more credits and graduate earlier	24	32	7	111	6
Chance to meet and work with many new people	11	21	14	89	7
Students learn more	4	12	5	41	8
Better chance of passing	6	3	1	25	9
Students and teachers really have to work - challenging	5	2	5	24	10
It's easier	3	3	5	20	11
Quarter grades are not averaged for the year	3	2	1	14	12
It's a new experience; a change	1	1	3	8	13
Eliminates attending summer school for make-ups	-	3	-	6	14
Get to know your school better	1	-	1	4	15
Get to know your teacher	-	1	1	3	16.5
It helps you decide on your future	1	-	-	3	16.5
You can stay with your friends	-	1	-	2	17.5
Easier to transfer	-	1	-	2	17.5
Makes classes more interesting	-	-	2	2	17.5
Prepares you for the college system	-	-	2	2	17.5
Courses are more specific	-	-	1	1	22.5
You miss days of classes while registering	-	-	1	1	22.5

No good points = 39

Listing good points = 486

APPENDIX D

Problems of the Quarter System

as Given by Students

Table XIII a.

Problems and Dislikes of Quarter System Given by 12th Graders (N=275)

Problems/Dislikes	Freq. of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
Failures must be repeated; grades not averaged for year	67	18	6	243	1
The disorganization, confusion, time lost during registration	50	21	12	204	2
Not enough good teachers to staff quarter system	24	25	8	130	3
Courses too short for full coverage and grade improvement	23	15	9	108	4
Teachers and students don't get to know each other	9	7	5	46	5
Too many irrelevant course requirements	6	6	5	35	6
Some teachers' attitudes and disinterest in students	6	7	-	32	7.5
Inadequate student counseling; explanation of quarter system	4	7	6	32	7.5
Grades and credits are often mixed up and late	8	2	3	31	9
Poor for poor learners; too many failures	3	4	2	19	10
Seniors are not given chance to register first	3	4	1	18	11
All departments not on quarter system	4	1	3	17	12
Difficulty in working out schedule	1	4	3	14	13
Accountability is difficult; lot of class cutting	3	-	1	10	14
Some students plan poor schedules with trivial courses	2	-	-	6	15
Too much clerical work	1	1	-	5	16.5
The administration	1	1	-	5	16.5
Overcrowding of preferred classes	1	1	-	5	16.5
You cannot always choose your own	1	1	-	5	16.5
Number of absentees allowed before failure	1	-	1	4	20
Teachers' complaints	1	-	-	3	21.5
Friends take subjects together	1	-	-	3	21.5
Different methods of teaching	-	1	-	2	23.5
No summer school quarter	-	1	-	2	23.5

No problems/dislikes = 7 Undecided = 1 Listing problems/dislikes = 267

Table XIII b.

Problems/and Dislikes of Quarter System Given by 11th Graders (N=457)

Problems/Dislikes	Freq. of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
The disorganization, confusion, time lost during registration	68	33	10	280	1
If you fail a course its sometimes hard to make up	58	13	8	208	2
Courses are too short for full coverage and grade improvement	46	26	14	204	3
Being crowded out of courses due to class senority	33	28	16	171	4
Failures must be repeated; grades are not averaged for year	37	23	8	165	5
Grades and credits are often mixed up and late	15	14	7	80	6
Poor for slow learners; too many failures	19	6	6	75	7
Inadequate student counseling; explanation of quarter system	14	9	3	63	8
Not enough good teachers to staff quarter system	11	7	2	49	9
Some teachers' attitudes and disinterest in students	9	5	1	38	10
All departments not on quarter system	10	3	1	37	11
Too many irrelevant course requirements	7	3	8	35	12
Overcrowding of preferred classes	4	4	3	23	13
Allowed only one english course per quarter	5	3	1	22	14
Teachers and students don't get to know each other	4	3	3	21	15
Difficulty in working out schedule	3	3	3	18	16
Sophmores choosing own courses	4	1	1	15	17
No summer quarter	3	1	-	11	18.5
Some students plan poor schedules with trivial courses	2	2	1	11	18.5
Different methods of teaching	1	3	1	10	20
Too much clerical work	2	-	-	6	21.5
No credit for some courses	1	1	1	6	21.5
Number of absentees allowed before failure	1	1	-	5	23
Teachers' complaints	1	-	-	3	24.5
Classes are too long	1	-	-	3	24.5
Accountibility is difficult; lot of class cutting	-	1	-	2	26.5
Lack of equipment and supplies; lost books	-	1	-	2	26.5

Table XIII b. cont.

Problems/and Dislikes of Quarter System Given by 11th Graders (N=457)

Problems/Dislikes	Freq. of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
Too many discipline problems	-	1	-	2	26.5
No post graduate program	-	1	-	2	26.5
Too many test	-	-	1	1	30.5
P.T.A. after each quarter	-	-	1	1	30.5

No problems/dislikes = 28 Listing problems/dislikes = 429.

Table XIII c.

Problems and Dislikes of Quarter System Given by 10th Graders(N=525)

Problems/Dislikes	Freq. of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
Failures must be repeated; grades are not averaged for year	105	19	11	357	1
Courses are too short for full coverage and grade improvement	58	34	14	256	2
The disorganization, confusion, time lost during registration	44	24	8	188	3
Being crowded out of courses due to seniority	35	14	7	140	4
Inadequate student counseling; explanation of quarter system	16	5	6	64	5
Grades and credits often mixed up and late	9	11	2	51	6
Some teachers' attitudes and disinterest in students	10	6	4	46	7
Teachers and students don't get to know each other	11	3	6	45	8
Not enough good teachers to staff quarter system	9	5	6	43	9
Too much course changing; transferring after enrollment	8	6	2	38	10
Difficulty in working out schedule	8	3	1	31	11
Too many irrelevant course requirements	6	3	-	24	12.5
All departments not on quarter system	4	6	-	24	12.5
Overcrowding of preferred classes	3	2	-	13	14.5
Very little time to change courses if you are failing during a quarter	3	2	-	13	14.5
Accountability is difficult; lot of class cutting	3	1	1	12	16
Number of absentees allowed before failure	3	1	-	11	17.5
Allowed only one english course per quarter	1	4	-	11	17.5
Poor for slow learners; too many failures	3	-	-	9	19
Same homeroom three years	2	1	-	8	20
Having to drop a course due to too few students	2	-	1	7	21
No summer quarter	1	1	-	5	22.5
Must attend summer school to make-up two quarter failures	1	1	-	5	22.5
Classes with 11th and 12th graders	1	-	-	3	24.5

Table XIII c.

Problems and Dislikes of Quarter System Given by 10th Graders (N=525

Problems/Dislikes	Freq. of Choices			Cumulative	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Value	Rank
The complaints of seniors	1	-	-	3	24.5
No examinations	1	-	-	3	24.5
Promises earlier graduation, but few graduate earlier	-	1	-	2	27.5
Not enough time to get to classes	-	-	2	2	27.5

No Problems/dislikes = 35 Undecided = 4 Listing problems/dislikes = 486

Total = 525

APPENDIX E

Departments On Quarter System And Other Systems

Departments On Quarter System And Other Systems

I. Quarter System

1. English
2. Social Studies
3. Science

II. Semester System

1. Mathematics
2. Foreign Language
3. Driver Education

III. Yearly System

1. Physical Education
2. Industrial Arts
3. Art
4. Military Science

IV. Semester And Yearly System

1. Home Economics
2. Business
3. Music